

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Longwood (c.1845) is a two-story frame Greek Revival house with an unusual plan. It is located in a rural setting on the east bank of the Mississippi River approximately two miles north of the East Baton Rouge-Iberville parish line. The house has undergone several changes since construction, but they are not serious enough to threaten its architectural integrity.

Longwood consists of two rectangular hip roofed masses, the larger of which is set behind the smaller. This gives the house an overall "T" shaped plan. Each story is serviced by a pair of corridors set in a cruciform plan. Although one would think that this oddly shaped configuration was built in stages, the architectural evidence strongly indicates that it was built all at once.

The main front of Longwood is three bays wide with a two-story Doric port gallery. When the house was built, this was the only gallery. It is fitted with cast-iron balustrades which appear to be original. Both the front and rear portions of the house are essentially one room deep. (See attached conceptual plan.)

Most of the windows are six over six, except for the floor-length ones, which are nine over nine. Floor-length windows are located mainly on the front gallery and on the upper story of the rear portion of the house. These rear floor-length windows were not built to open onto galleries. Each was fitted with a cast-iron balustrade within the frame to prevent people from falling. Only one such balustrade remains. Shutters are of the fixed louver type and are fastened with wrought iron hinges which are held in place by screws.

The interiors are relatively plain. Originally only the front parlor had a cornice. The parlor also features a ceiling medallion with plaster anthemions. Four of the original eleven simple Greek Revival mantels remain.

The following changes have occurred in the house since construction:

- (1) As previously mentioned, all but one of the rear upper window balustrades have been lost.
- (2) Also as previously mentioned, only four of the eleven original mantels remain.
- (3) In the early-twentieth century a single story rear gallery was added and an outbuilding was moved up to the rear to form a kitchen. (See conceptual plan.)
- (4) The original plaster facade under the front gallery has been replaced with board and batten siding.
- (5) A few of the original paneled interior doors have been replaced with glass doors.
- (6) Wooden panels in the front and rear hall doors have been replaced with sheets of glass.
- (7) One of the two sets of interior stairs has been taken out.
- (8) New cornices have been installed in the hall and in some of the rooms.
- (9) Bathrooms and closets have been added.
- (10) A small alcove has been created in the lower rear hall by moving two of the adjacent walls slightly.

(11) A few small windows were added in order to light the above bathrooms.

Assessment of Integrity:

The aforementioned changes should be regarded as minor given the total scope of Longwood's architecture. In any case, the house still retains the features mentioned in Item 8 which establish its significance. The lower hall has been altered slightly, but its overall configuration is still recognizable. The upper hall remains intact.

Outbuildings:

To the rear of the house are a shed and a large barn, both of which date from 1928. They are included in the nominated area along with the well-treed front yard because all contribute to one's appreciation of Longwood as a rural plantation house. This is an important consideration because Longwood will soon be engulfed by the expanding suburban development of the city of Baton Rouge.

Specific dates           c.1845  
Builder/Architect       builder uncertain

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)  
Criterion C

Longwood Plantation House is locally significant in the area of architecture because it is a distinctive example among a small group of surviving two-story Greek Revival residences in East Baton Rouge Parish.

In recent decades East Baton Rouge Parish has lost much of its antebellum building stock due to decay and urbanization. As far as the State Historic Preservation Office is aware, Longwood is one of only four of the parish's remaining two-story Greek Revival residences. All of these are similar in that they feature two-story columnar galleries under projecting hip roofs. But Longwood is conspicuous among this group because of its unusual floor plan. The limited temple-like facades of Greek Revival residences often had a restricting effect upon their floor plans. Most houses provided for extra space by extending an "L" wing in the rear. But Longwood's solution to the problem of extra space was far more distinctive. A second building mass was extended behind the main block of the house which was accessible via a cruciform hall plan. This represents an innovation which is unique among period buildings in the parish.

Major Bibliographical References

East Baton Rouge Parish Conveyance Records